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give an imaginative representation of what men believe, think, feel, see and do ; and the greatest poet is the one who does the most of this. And because the Psalmist has done so much, he stands pre-eminent among all poets. One need not give illustrations of this. Too many lines of familiar Psalms, repeated oft in joy, in sorrow, in faith, in fear, in praise, in penitence, suggest themselves.

If one, then, will hold communion with the heart of humanity, if he will know its throbbing beats among the people who were chosen to give religion to the world, let him study Hebrew Poetry, let him live in song with their shepherds, warriors, priests and kings, freemen, tillers of their own soil, captives languishing in exile, let him live thus with them and he will hold communion too with God.

THE HISTORICAL ARGUMENT IN THE PENTATEUCH PROBLEM.

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The Pentateuchal sphinx with her riddle still manages to perplex biblical scholars, and the Œdipus with a solution satisfactory to all has not yet put in his appearance. While the day of excitement and fear may be considered past, as far as Kuenen's and Wellhausen's radical protest against the traditional convictions of the synagogue and the church are concerned, we have now entered upon the second stage of the controversy, that of more cool and objective, and hence more effective, refutation of the new hypothesis and its revolutionary conclusions. The run of the debate is as similar to that of Baur and the Tuebingen school in regard to the basal documents of Christianity, as one egg is like another, and the indications are that, as in the former case the gospels and the Christianity of the gospels came forth purified and better established than ever before, thus, too, the outcome of the heated controversy on the character and history of Israel's religion will be a complete vindication of the revelation of God in the Old Testament. Christian scholars should not only not discourage the most searching critical investigations of the sacred records, but should even invite such a discussion. For if the books that claim to be the revelation from God cannot stand the test of a powerful but just critical microscope, then it is time to reject them as false ; if, on the other hand, they are, as we claim them to be, the words of the living God, then such a critical examination can only strengthen their authority.

The leading argument in the whole discussion of the Pentateuch problem during the past few years, at least on the offensive side, has been of an historical character. Attempts were made to bring the philological argument to bear on the discussion of the stratification of Old Testament literature, but the result was unsatisfactory to about all concerned. So small is the Hebrew literature preserved, and so few are the differences in diction and style, that nothing beyond possibilities could be offered. How flexible this argument was, can, for instance, be seen in the case of the *Q'ri perpetuum Hiw'* in the Pentateuch. Formerly this was considered without protest as a sign of the antiquity of the text; now it is with equal certainty claimed as an indication of the late composition of the Priest-codex. Even such sharp investigations as Ryssell's *De Elohistae Sermone* offer but little for the point in question. The leading argument, then, remained the historical, namely, that in the earlier stages of Israel's religious and political development there are no signs of the existence or influence of the Levitical features of the law; that these, the leading characteristics, first became a power in the life of the Israelites after the captivity; and that, accordingly, the law stands not at the head, but at the close of the Old Testament history and religion. It is virtually an *argumentum ex silentio*, although the attempt is frequently made to supplement this negative argument by the positive proof that the early records of Israel show a state of affairs entirely contrary and contradictory to that demanded by the law; that primitive prophecy, which is represented as the ruling power in the pre-legal period, inculcated a religion different from that now known as Mosaism and based upon the law. This is the line of argument pursued by the advocates of the new and radical views. In reality there lies at the bottom of their structure a philosophical idea, namely, that of development. They start out from the premises that the religion of Israel is a purely natural product, and to be explained as a purely natural process. As Kuenen himself says (*De Godsdiens*t, p. 5.): "The religion of Israel is one of the leading ones; nothing less, but also nothing more." It is this idea of development, whose correct application to science has been productive of so much good, but whose abuse has created such havoc, which guides the whole conduct of the debate, although *ex professo* the advanced critics claim to be directed only by the facts in the case.

As matters stand, the historical line of investigation will have to decide the point in dispute. For any other course of argumentation we lack the material; at least we do not possess it as fully as we do this. Nobody can blame the leaders of the new school for having

adopted this method of investigation. Even if the New Testament views of the Old Testament dispensation, as far as the literary side of its records is concerned, could be settled, in regard to the fact in the case, to the satisfaction of all, yet the bearing and weight of the fact as such would necessarily be the subject of still further debate. We do not doubt that the historical argument must remain the common ground upon which advanced and conservative scholars must meet, and there settle the great problems at issue.

But in the unfolding of this argument it is necessary that the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, be put under requisition. A truly scientific treatment of the subject demands that each and every element that historically entered into the composition and development of Israel's history and its records be appealed to, in order to learn exactly what this course and growth was; and just here it is where the protagonists of the radical views are unscientific in their methods and unjust to the facts. It sounds well and reasonable to hear them claim that, in the interpretation of the facts of Israel's religion, we should proceed in exactly the same manner and spirit and according to the same hermeneutical principles which we apply to the productions of any human author. But here it is where they beg the question at issue, and where they are unscientific in their treatment. Their demand would be just and right, in case these books were really and entirely compositions like those of Homer or Herodotus, and in case the Old Testament Codex were really an accidental collection of Israel's literary remains, like the extant literatures of early India, Greece and Rome. But such is not the case. The Old Testament claims to be and is a revelation and the history of a revelation. According to the views of those that wrote them, of those that read them and observed them as their guide of faith and life, and of Christ and the New Testament writers, the Old Testament books are the account of God's dealings with men and with Israel in carrying out his plans for the restoration of mankind to the estate from which man fell through sin. The Old Testament has one central and controlling idea, and that is, a covenant between God and man for the restoration of the latter. Everything else within the covers of the sacred codex has its importance measured according to its bearing on this thought. This is the one directing fact in Old Testament religion and history.

This being the case, it is evident that a truly scientific application of the historical argument demands that this great fact be allowed its force and weight in determining what the order of composition was in books of the Old Testament. Any arrangement of these books, or parts of a book, which conflicts with the scheme of religious develop-

ment as demanded by the internal character of this religion itself, and is laid open in the books of this religion, must be considered wrong. To place at the beginning of this development a book that internally shows that it is the fruit of the full development of this religion, or to put at the end of the history of this religion a book that manifestly contains the fundamental revelation underlying the whole religious system of the Israelites, are equally false. The theological side of the historical argument must be used as complementary and supplementary to the purely critical. Naturally these cannot contradict each other; because truth is one, and both elements make up the one truth of what was the historical unfolding of Israel's religion. A just and fair treatment of the historical argument, then, includes this great religious truth, as well as the critical, historical and philological.

Applying briefly the principles thus gained to the problem before us, we learn that the law, by virtue of its inner character and its object and aim in the Old Testament dispensation, stands at the head, and not at the end of this dispensation. The law is not the principle and foundation of the Old Testament covenant; and the idea that the legal feature did occupy this position is a *proton pseudos* not only of the new attacks on the Old Testament religion, but also of many well-meant misinterpretations of it. The cardinal principle of this covenant was faith in the promises of God for the redemption of his people. St. Paul, in his frequent argumentations against the belief in legal righteousness as maintained by the orthodox Pharisaic systems of his day, repeatedly urges this important truth, that the saints of the Old Covenant were justified and made righteous exactly in the same manner as were those of the new, namely, by faith; and that, accordingly, the principle of justification by faith alone is the central doctrine of the Old, as it is of the New Testament. Cf. especially, Rom. IV. and Gal. III., 6-14. This being the case, the law could have a purpose only subservient to this; and what this was, the apostle teaches in Gal. III., 21-23, namely, that the law was intended to be a "schoolmaster unto Christ." The lesson of faith had to be learned by the people of the covenant. As long as the covenant was confined to the family, it was possible for God, through his providential guidance of the patriarchs and their families, to teach them this faith; and this he did. But when the personal covenant assumed a national form, it was necessary to conduct, guide and direct this nation in such a manner that the people might learn that Jehovah was the Lord and the ruler, and that, in following and trusting in him, they could have prosperity, and be acceptable and righteous in his sight. To teach this was the purpose of the law. It was given to form a hedge around the

people, so as to cut them off from the temptations of idolatry—the cardinal and fundamental sin against the spirit of the covenant,—and thus put the people outwardly in such a condition that the object of the law in and within the hearts of the people could be effected. This inner purpose was the recognition, in the mandates of the law, of the duties incumbent upon the people as the chosen children of the covenant, and the knowledge that an inability to comply with these just demands of the Lord compelled those living under the covenant to throw themselves at the feet of the Lord of mercies. The law thus aimed to teach the people their sins, and thus to awaken in them the prayer for and hope of a Savior from these sins. In this manner it proved, or was intended to prove, to be a “schoolmaster unto Christ.” Under the outward form of a theocracy, it was inwardly to educate the Israelite to a recognition and desire for the coming of Him in whom all prophecy centred, and of whose wonderful deeds of mercy the people saw the foreshadowing types in their sacrifices, rituals and worship.¹

The law, then, was the great and powerful means in the hands of God to educate the people into the acceptance of the great lesson of the Old Testament covenant, namely, faith in God’s promises of a Redeemer. It being of such fundamental importance in this educational process of Israel’s religion and history, it is evident that the whole scheme and character of this religious process demands that the law stand at the head and not at the end of this development. Without it all prophecy, and in fact the whole Old Testament religious life, is unintelligible. Without the law to start with, this religious life is more than an enigma; it is a self-contradiction. Whatever, then, the outward evidences may be as to the origin and succession of the Old Testament books, or parts of books, certain it is that the inner character of these books and the bearing of their contents on the character and history of Israel’s religion, demands for the law the position assigned to it by the traditions and convictions of centuries, and the consideration of this fact should constitute a not unimportant factor in the historical argument on the Pentateuch question.

¹ A lengthy discussion of the character of the Old Testament covenant, from the pen of the writer, will be found in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for July, 1885.